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COMMENTS.

MR. EDITOR: Mrs. Cady Stanton, in her contribution to the May number of the REVIEW, entitled "Has Christianity benefited Woman?" declares that "the church in the fifth century fully developed the doctrine of original sin, making woman its weak and guilty author." While there is some ambiguity in this language, it is noteworthy that the temper of Mrs. Stanton's article goes far to justify the scorned dogma. The article is passionate, intolerant, and startlingly free from the conventional limitations of delicacy. In all these respects it stands in marked contrast with Bishop Spalding's rejoinder. Whatever may be thought of the cogency of his arguments, the bishop is uniformly calm, dignified, and courteous. It is unfortunate for Mrs. Stanton that, with so fine an opportunity for proving the woman equal to the man, she has thus allowed him to get the advantage of her. Even to hint the opinion that "all the degradation and injustice that she [woman] has suffered might logically be traced to the same source [Christianity]," is to manifest a partisan unfairness from which not only sweetness but light has wholly disappeared. Nothing can be more disingenuous than to represent, though by quotation, Paul's doctrine of marriage as providing simply for "the gratification of instinct without sin." He says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Is that to love grossly? Mrs. Stanton's reasoning is vitiated by several obvious fallacies. By an insufficient induction she tries to establish the favorable condition of woman previous to the Christian era. From the uncertain usages of the ancient Egyptians and Germans she derives "a long, spiral ergo" of inference and conclusion. At this point Bishop Spalding's historical survey is much broader, and his collection of facts much more complete. If he had chosen to muster authorities, he would have had an embarrassment of riches. Neander, for example, in treating of "the ennobled family relations" resulting from Christianity, says: "Wherever Christianity found entrance, the equal dignity and worth of the female sex, as possessing a nature created in the image of God, and allied to the divine, no less than the male, was brought distinctly before the consciousness, in opposition to the principles of the ancient world, particularly in the East, where the woman was placed in an altogether subordinate relation to man." Another fallacy running through Mrs. Stanton's argument is that which is known as *post hoc, propter hoc*. Like Latimer's peasant, who ascribed the Goodwin Sands to Tenderden Steeple, she makes Christianity the cause of evils with which it has no causal connection. Shall we hold laws responsible for the crimes that they do not

prevent? and charity organizations for the pauperism they cannot remove? or the really noble cause of woman's elevation for Mrs. Stanton's bad logic? A third fallacy in her argument is the confounding of the church with Christianity. Christianity is more than the church. Christianity may be in the air as a controlling *zeit-geist*, and may even be promoting a reform to which the church is a positive obstruction. Thus it is that "the canon law," which so excites Mrs. Stanton's spleen, may not, in various particulars, be properly Christian at all. Here Bishop Spalding's church principles inevitably limited the effectiveness of his reply. The whole tenor of Mrs. Stanton's article excites the suspicion that in her passion for "perfect equilibrium" between the sexes, she is willing to destroy marriage and the family. Does she really mean to intimate that Aspasia and Diotema, in their "questionable position," did not sacrifice too much to intellectual and social independence?

J. R. KENDRICK.

MR. EDITOR: I have read with great interest the able discussion in the February number of the REVIEW, on the question of electing the President of our Republic. It appears to me that the real difficulty about the direct vote in the Convention of 1787 was different from what is generally supposed. I take it that it lay in the dual position of the slaves, who were considered at one and the same time as human beings and as chattels. It must be remembered that the mode of representing them in Congress had well-nigh broken up the Convention, and that after it had been settled, every one feared to re-open the question. This settlement permitted the slave States to add three-fifths of the number of slaves to the white population in fixing the ratio of representation of those States in Congress, and a similar advantage was claimed by those States in Presidential elections. But in a direct vote such an advantage would have flagrantly degraded every vote in a free State, since it would have made five votes in a slave State equal to eight in a free State, and shown openly that eight Northerners were only worth five Southerners. A wish to avoid this dilemma I conceive to have been the main reason against adopting the direct vote in the Convention; and to-day, as this reason fails, the main objection against a direct vote no longer exists. Let me also call attention to the monstrous inequalities inherent in our present system. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that there are 360 electoral votes in all, of which New York is entitled to thirty-six and Vermont to three. Let us suppose, also, that in a close election 500 Vermonters had crossed the line, and by voting in this State had secured the vote of New York for their candidate. Admitting that by this change Vermont were lost to them, they only lose one one hundred and twentieth, while they gain one-tenth of the Electoral College. But if the result in their State is not affected, then from mere useless swellers of a majority, mere ciphers, these 500 men have decided the vote of one-tenth of the entire voting power of the country. Many other illustrations of a like nature will suggest themselves. The argument that the Electoral College preserves the influence of the smaller States vanishes when seen by this light. It does the very contrary. In the State of Vermont a majority of 100,000 would only give three votes to a Presidential candidate, while a majority of one in New York State will give him

thirty-six. This proves conclusively that by the electoral system the weight of a vote increases in direct ratio with the size of the State, and gives an extravagantly disproportionate power to the large States. The direct vote, which makes the vote of one citizen equal to that of another, no matter where cast, would not deprive the smaller States of their proper influence; it would restore it to them.

ISAAC L. RICE.

MR. EDITOR: I regret to learn, through his article on "Free Thought in America," in your April number, that the distinguished Briton, Mr. Robert Buchanan, has imbibed so unfavorable an opinion of the United States and of Ingersoll. I, in common with the English critic, deplore the materialism of our age, and recognize the need of a more humanized humanity. This is why I support our great poet-orator. Therefore, when I find him characterized as "a devil's advocate, preaching the gospel of hot ginger, cakes, and ale," I feel like saying—little as he needs it—a word in his vindication. If our country is materialistic, who made it so? The Christian church has hitherto held almost undisputed sway. Free thought cannot do much worse. Ingersoll, rightly understood, is a modern prophet. Let us remember that it was Christ who anathematized the Scribes and Pharisees, and drove the money-changers from the sanctuary. Ingersoll, far from "entering the temples of religion with his hat on one side, a cigar in his mouth, and a jest upon his lips," is assailing the shrines of superstition with the bludgeon of his intellect, the rapier of his ridicule, and the sword of his righteous wrath. He, happily, has no reverence for rot nor respect for pretentious pietism; but, far from "trampling on the lotus, the rose, and the lily in the garden of the gods," he would root up the deadly nightshade of error and the poison vine of ignorance, to replant in a better earth the flowers of a fairer life. Mr. Buchanan admits that "the history of Christianity has been a long chapter of horrors," and that "its priests and paid professors have been the enemies of human progress." In this confession he gives up his case against our great champion, since to crush out such crimes and evils Ingersoll takes his sturdy and relentless stand. Two great antagonistic currents of philosophy are discernible as running through civilization; the theological and the scientific. Theology, as a body of dogma, positing a supposititious deity in an impossible heaven, erects upon such arbitrary divine authority the tyranny of king over subject, of priest over layman, of master over slave, and finds its motive in a selfish other-worldliness. Science, on the other hand, though it declines to affirm an unknowable god and an unverifiable immortality, would make "man the master of things," would in government decree democracy, in industry coöperation, and would recognize its motive in human mutualism. Against the one tendency and for the other Ingersoll ever lifts the magic of his voice. On the one or other of these sides all must sooner or later array themselves; and in this holy warfare liberals of every school, uniting on the main issues and sinking their minor differences, should show one solid front. That Ingersoll represents completeness no man claims; but were all men more like him, the world would be far nearer its millennium. To oppose him is to oppose progress.

COURTLANDT PALMER.

MR. EDITOR: Mr. David Dudley Field shows, among other things, in his otherwise able article in the May number of the REVIEW, that he is not familiar with the history of coöperation in Europe — of the coöperative factories and shops founded and managed by labor exclusively, and of the coöperative factories and homes founded and managed by labor and capital united. While they were and are good enough, in their way, as palliatives only, or as “local applications,” their most enthusiastic advocates now admit that they have failed as radical cures of the “king’s evil” that affects Europe; that, therefore, they would still more completely fail as remedies for the still more grievous corporate evil of America, is a conclusion that seems to me entirely self-evident. No thinking man complains of associations or of corporations in themselves, nor of combined action and aggregated capital in themselves. What is government, else, or society, or a nation, or an army? What working men and serious students do protest against, and what they are determined to abolish, is the creation of a privileged class, with all the inherent vices and insolent pretensions of the old oligarchies, and without even one of their remedial or humane limitations. A new corporation that, as the great English lawyer says, has “neither a soul to be saved, nor a breech to be kicked,” is a far more dangerous enemy to the “ideal commonwealth,” which, as Mr. Field says, is “our American aim” (in which there shall be not only no inequality of rights, but in which all shall have food, raiment, shelter, and equal chances of pursuing their own welfare) than an “old family,” whose fears and whose traditions, if they did not break the shackles of labor, at least covered the iron with velvet — or homespun. Now — and this fact should be emphasized — Mr. Field’s definition of an ideal commonwealth is an exact description of American life (excepting as to the colored races) before the rise of the present corporative dynasty (excepting again, to use Mr. Field’s words, applied to a different policy, “where the laws of the land were pitted against the laws of nature” — that is to say, in the Southern States, in which the ever-hungry maw of slavery incessantly devoured the most fertile land, and thereby drove the negroless whites to the swamps and mountains, precisely as a kindred system drove the Irish peasants to the wet bogs and barren hills of Connemara). The slave power was a corporation whose tyranny was limited here and there by individual human sympathies, and everywhere by the fear of a servile insurrection; but these artificial beings, “bloodless and incorporeal,” that we call corporations, are absolutely destitute of all human sympathies, and, again, are only held in check by the fear of a fiercer insurrection of the laborers. Mr. Field’s remedy not only comes too late, but it does not strike at the root of our political upas-tree. Corporate usurpations have come from special privileges to classes, conferred on them by legislation. The evils that laws have wrought, other laws must not remedy only, but make impossible for all time to come. It is contrary to the American idea to depend for justice on the supposed “fraternal feelings” of a class whose entire power rests on monopoly — that is to say, on inequality of rights. The true remedy must be sought in restoring equality of rights, either by the sternest State supervision of corporate actions, or by State ownership and direct control of undertakings now delegated to practically irresponsible combinations of capitalists.

J. V. NELSON.

MR. EDITOR: The literarists manifest some conceit in their wail over those lost in "cakes and ale," because some have lost sight of the "immortal gods," and prefer the voice of Darwin to that of Moses. Does understanding the conditions of mind degrade it any more than immaterializing it and projecting it in space? It takes something besides transcendentalism and experience to fortify the facts of relation. Those who live much in their ideal creations may lose sight of their surroundings, and become automatic to antecedent ideas; then they have little use for the senses and the intellect. They may receive intuition direct, and have the authority of the lunatic. Every emotionalist and prophet that idealizes antecedent impressions into a dream-like entity, while he knows his ghost, may not know it was conditioned by his subjective states, or the want of "cakes," or even disease. The philosopher of the midway, Buddha, learned the effect of diet in his six years' fast, which caused visions of Mara, or despondency, and visions of Indra, exaltation. Ardá Viráf was inspired by three golden cups of wine and the sacred nareosis of Vishtasf, and gave us the conditions and splendors of paradise. The ascetic philosophy, which has been revitalized with several new prophets, and is believed by nine-tenths of the human race, is a power in fusing social solidarity as well as antagonism. I cannot say that the modern ideal of the unknowable is not the legitimate offspring of asceticism. It appears to have been the offspring of incogency or incomplete thoughts; as Kant would say, "merely the cupola of a judgment, as all inferences that would lead us beyond the limits of experience are fallacious and groundless." This, however, does not affect its use as a mythos. The philosophy of race-development, progress, or solidarity might be called an *Etré* or Being; but this mythos could excite no more pathos in an intelligent mind than understanding the elements of society, their relations, and destiny. It appears to me that science will give a greater concord of feeling and fusing solidarity than any philosophy whatever, as it contains all the elements of persistence, extension, and development.

A. J. MOORE.

MR. EDITOR: Mr. Field suggests an excellent plan, in his article on co-operation, in the May number of the REVIEW, but in practice it would meet with two serious obstacles: That "the destruction of the poor is their poverty," is as true now as in the days of Solomon, and there are few operatives that would be willing or feel able to let any part of their wages remain unused. But a worse difficulty lies in the fact that there is so great a lack of education on the part of the vast majority of our wage-workers. So long as prosperity attended a coöperative enterprise, and the laborers received their dividends regularly, all would be well; but in times of depression the position of the managers would be worse than that of the judges at a baby-show. The writer once knew a mechanic of much more than ordinary ability and intelligence, and a business man, who united their limited means for the prosecution of a business in which the former managed the shop, and the latter attended to the salesroom. The first year the profits of the concern were more than treble the combined salaries the proprietors had ever earned, and the business had been honestly conducted, yet the mechanic was dissatisfied with the result, though a minute statement of the year's business was

prepared for his inspection. He was unable to examine the books himself, and would not be satisfied with the efforts of any other person. The business continued to be unusually prosperous for several years, but the mechanic was always complaining that he was not getting his rights, though many concessions were made to him for the sake of peace. Finally the business man asked for a dissolution. It was granted, and the mechanic tried to conduct the business alone, and lost an ample fortune in a few years. A number of experienced operatives tried to run a large woolen mill on the coöperative plan. All was harmonious for two or three years, but when a depression in the market took place, and dividends were light, the managers were at once accused of fraud, and the enterprise was abandoned. These are two of many instances that have come under the observation of the writer, and seem to lead to the conclusion that coöperation cannot succeed until those engaged in it have sufficient education to take an intelligent view of business and to understand all the statements presented to them, and have the ability to spare a part of their earnings in order to accumulate the necessary capital.

S. W. NICHOLS.

MR. EDITOR: On a careful perusal of Prof. Youmans's article, "Herbert Spencer's Latest Critic," in the REVIEW of last November, I found, to my surprise, that the matter printed in small type, instead of corroborating the matter printed in large type, does the very reverse. Thus we are told in large type that Mr. Davis translates a certain Greek word by "will" and "volitional faculties." In the small type, however, the actual translation is "a ready will." But "a ready will" intimates submissiveness, and is the very contrary of the "will." In large type Prof. Youmans next quotes Ritter in support of Mr. Davis's translation. But on reading the small type, we find that Ritter translates that word by "spirit," and not a shadow of a "will" do we find, not even a "ready" one! Next we are told in large type that Plato considers state enactments the sources of right and wrong. But in small type, instead of finding any such assertion of Plato's, we are told, on the contrary, that legislators "are capable of erring," and make "some" laws that are "right," and "some" that are "wrong." These erring legislators, who pose as sources of right and wrong because they make some laws right and some wrong, are comical figures! But in large type Mr. Bain is introduced as holding the same view. Yet in small type Mr. Bain qualifies this by a demand for an "ideal state and ideal governors." Does not Prof. Youmans perceive that ideal legislators could not err, and therefore could not make some laws right and some wrong, and therefore could not fill his requirements at all? I fear that among Prof. Youmans and Messrs. Spencer, Davis, Ritter, and Bain, poor Plato is becoming decidedly mixed. No less amusingly self-contradicting than the linguistic are the musical efforts of the learned Professor. He conveys, in large type, the surprising information that there is such a thing as a *fugue* in one part. But it is easier to find a needle in a haystack than the one-part fugue in the small type. On the contrary, we are there told that "we call that a fugue where one part beginneth and the other singeth the same, for some number of notes (which the first did sing), as for example (here follows a simple two-part fugue, in which the second voice begins a bar after the first!)." But Prof. Youmans caps the

climax by criticising Mr. Rice in large type for not knowing that Mr. Cliffe Leslie retracted in one paper what he had written in another. Does the Professor seriously expect Mr. Rice to read all the newspapers in the world? Yet in reading the small type we cannot find that Mr. Leslie retracted anything. He only acknowledges that "in the main" a reply of Mr. Spencer's is satisfactory to him. Mr. Rice honestly refers to that reply, and gives reasons why it is not satisfactory. He must be judged by those reasons, not by Mr. Leslie's acknowledgments. Nay, more, the last edition of Mr. Spencer's works, published by the Appletons, under the very eye of Prof. Youmans, says not one word of Mr. Leslie's acknowledgment. Will the Professor blame Mr. Rice for relying on that edition?

E. O. RALPH.

MR. EDITOR: The article in the May number of the *REVIEW*, entitled "How to Reform English Spelling," by Prof. T. W. Hunt, is well worthy of serious consideration, inasmuch as it will, if practically realized, produce an era in the world of letters. We do not require to be told; each day presents sufficiently positive evidence that the so-called "historical" method of English spelling is not only the bane of foreigners and of the army of school-children, but a source of mortification to many real scholars. The reason is, that the social code, which is as unrelenting in the realm of letters as elsewhere, insists that accurate orthography shall be a never-failing attribute of one who aspires to the name of scholar; while the scholar who may be deficient in the mere art of memorizing, cannot conscientiously squander time and intellectual force in attempting to master a letter-puzzle so utterly arbitrary and illogical. The author answers two of the leading objections made to the proposed new method, and his refutation is pointed and convincing, unless one is already blinded by prejudice. Throughout, Prof. Hunt's assertions are based upon unquestionable authority. Even the most conservative on the subject of reform in English orthography cannot do otherwise than yield respectful attention when such distinguished names as Müller, Whitney, March, and Scott are cited. As the author says, "The sanctions are so high and numerous that if adduced in any other scheme of reform, they would be accepted as final and would warrant a fair trial." The cry for reform in this department of literature is not, therefore, the selfish cry of bad spellers merely, who urge on a revolution, knowing that, whatever results, it can be none the worse for them; but it is the demand of scholars and thoughtful men throughout the English-spelling world; it is a demand for simplification in place of abstruse complication, for some positive guiding basis in the place of none whatever. Surely this demand, and the practical way in which the great educators of the present century are setting about to answer it, attest the powerful undercurrent of good sense that is bound, sooner or later, to break through the crust of mere sentimentalism and unreasoning conservatism.

A. C. BOWEN.

MR. EDITOR: If, in asking the question, "Has Christianity benefited woman?" Mrs. Stanton and Bishop Spalding mean by Christianity the teachings of the Christ, the answer must be, Yes, in so far as these have prevailed;

but if by Christianity they mean monasticism, and much of the popular theology of the day, the answer must be, No. The superstition that these are synonymous with the teaching of the adorable Christ, whose name they blaspheme, is superstition as harmful as any of the world's darkest age. The present sad plight of theology is owing to the fact that man has ignored the teaching of him who came to show us the unity of the divine and human, and how it might be realized; yet, for every ray of light, and for all the highest that the world has ever seen, we are entirely indebted to that spirit which was in Christ Jesus. Mrs. Stanton cites England and America as the countries wherein Christianity is dominant, and admits that in them the highest type of womanhood is to be found. She then says, "Yet even here women have been compelled to clear their own way for every step in progress." And why should they not? Only can they make progress by patient, persistent endeavor. Let them keep right on, for there are no limits that man has set her that woman will not righteously transcend. In reading Bishop Spalding's paper one must keep in mind the fundamental stand-point of the sect that he represents, which is the absolute denial of subjective freedom; and must remember that he is one of a body of men (and men only) who claim that God has delegated the government of his world to them, making them supreme above state and individual. He tells us that "purity, meekness, patience, faith, and love, which are the virtues that our blessed Lord most emphasized, are above all womanly virtues." Who told him so? "He does not exalt intellect, courage, and strength." Intellect does not belong in a category of the virtues, and men have no monopoly of it, nor did our blessed Lord ever classify the virtues as manly or womanly. Woman cannot be womanly without courage, or man manly without purity. The assumption that "the church" has power to make man the head of the family is false, and is presently contradicted by Bishop Spalding himself, when he admits that it is love in the heart of woman which exalts man to that supreme dignity, and that, in conferring it upon him, the woman exercises the highest prerogative of which mortal is possessed — a prerogative that she does not share with church or state, and for the exercise of which she is individually responsible to Almighty God. In so far as man has limited the freedom of woman, he has limited his own, and impaired the birthright of his children, the greatest crime of which the race is capable. Together they are the unit of humanity and its institutions, and apart they have no rational existence.

CHARLOTTE F. DALEY.